



# argus

fall 1979





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## ON MAKING A COVER: The Artist's Viewpoint

Hermes came as a murderer (a warrior?) to beguile the innocent mortal, Argus.

Hermes prevailed, Argus died. Hermes was an achiever, a doer, a success-in-life, a go-getter.

However, these deceitful praises tell too little of the tale. The hundred eyes of Argus still stare, unblinking, accusing, forever, from the peacock's tail. Haunting eyes remind us of the shame of Hermes. Argus lives; the gods are dead.

And where is Hermes, messenger of the gods? He still survives, barely, selling himself and flowers through someone else's TV commercials.

Flowers for the dead.

# ARGUS

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1 FALL 1979

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**Editor:** Cindy Totten

**Editorial Staff:** Millard Bienvenu, Cecil E. Burns, Joe Moran, Nigel Nicholson

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Christine Pickering

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## ACCEPTANCE

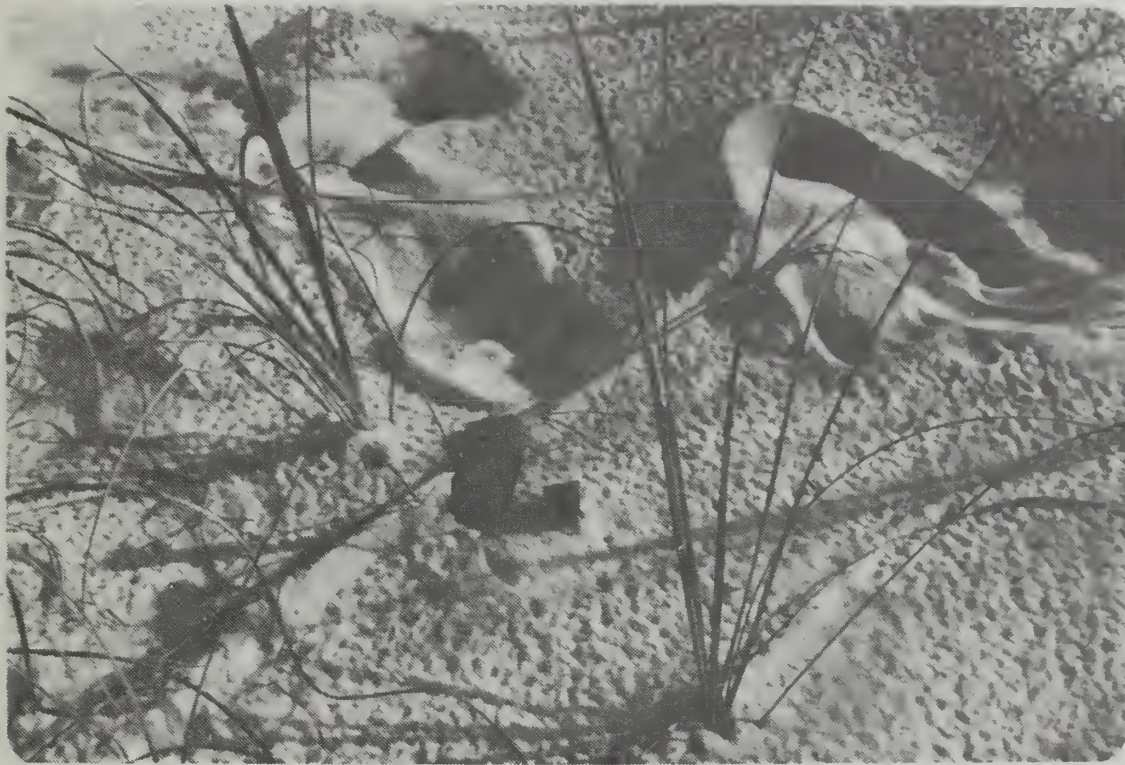
And I wandered alone beside the sea,  
Watched the sun rise above Autumn's red haze,  
Knew I was incapable of understanding,  
Yet, had observed in my time enormous trees,  
The deposition of rain from wet wombs of clouds  
Winter and Summer gleaned with the passage of years;  
Gradually, they say, a man gets to know himself.  
The murky essence of nature I've imagined  
Opened like a great hand, God-like against  
the cobalt sky.

Life, I saw emerge from shadows  
Like messenger boys or postmen with the mail;  
Yet, the significance of those times,  
And indeed, of countless moments in between,  
Seemed to haunt me with their curious designs  
Undulating as in pools of water.

And alone I wandered,  
Tracing the tracks of sandpipers,  
Watching gulls hang lazy arcs on the updraft,  
While far below their dancing wings,  
Waves piled infinitely high  
Like exploding walls of rolling battlements;  
And I knew that I understood nothing  
In the way of some profound revelation,  
Knew I was profoundly a stranger  
In the presence of a power inconceivable;  
That this perfection was something unknowable to me  
as pure love, as death;  
That the peak moment of my existence  
May already have been property of the past  
And it was perhaps that essence I was searching for  
But not finding because of some flaw in myself.

We look upon the world as harnessed horses  
with blinders on  
Subjugated by conformity and the law;  
We wander beside an aging sea  
Whose eternal struggle we cannot fathom  
Without flinging ourselves into it directly,  
Accepting a love perhaps deeper than ourselves.

*Grayson Harper*



## THE SEA

Waves breaking  
distant rumbling  
ancient groaning  
dark, mysterious  
timeless  
now and forever  
The Sea

*David L. Ulmer*

## Galveston Bay

The endless ocean  
swallowing the moon  
wet sand under my feet  
sea mist on my face.  
I am a part of it  
I hear the voices  
of the ages  
in the seashells.  
The water  
washes me clean  
of my imperfections  
I am reborn  
I am free.

*David L. Ulmer*

## POLICY FOR EQUAL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW

Went to the hardware store this morning  
And said to the man at the counter:  
"I would like a gun."  
To which he smiled and said, "What for?"

"Because  
I'm  
afraid  
of  
Other People's  
GUNS."

So

I got mine  
To protect me  
From theirs

And they got theirs  
To protect them

from  
ME.

Whoopee!

*Grayson Harper*

## THE CROWD

How easily a man may pass  
Unnoticed in the crowd!  
A blade of grass  
Waving in the wind with its silent  
thoughts  
Seems nothing among so many.

The hours chase each other  
Like children darting in and out of  
quiet streets;  
At day's end, all thoughts, all deeds  
Dwindle down,  
And people come and go like the hours.

*Grayson Harper*



## SUBLIMINAL JOURNEY

Wet air floats stagnant  
To kiss pavement suffered by dripping,  
Muting the shuffle of footsteps.  
And streetlamps form a chain of pearl cones  
Disappearing in the distance.  
A woman touches a circle  
To pass each shaded orb.  
Conscious of the fluid of her hips,  
She slowly progresses,  
As her eyes sparkle to smile at each man.  
An utterance from the black  
And she looks, avoiding caution,  
To see glowing green eyes reflect in the dimness.  
She listens in awe to the low forceful drone  
Reading the ludicrous past.  
The men; nights of writhing passions,  
Days sleeping off the stain  
And quietly stuffing the pouch of her bra.  
A long cloaked arm,  
And she runs, refusing to look back  
While a bright, white smile watches.  
A step from the shadow  
To adjust the hood of the cape;  
And bowing in thought  
To noiselessly vanish in the night.

*Donnie Boyett*

## Black on White

Black on White  
legs  
from thigh to toe  
stretching for comfort  
or reaching for truth  
truth that lies  
somewhere between the sheets  
bathed in prejudice  
stripped of human feelings  
Black on White  
hands moving to turn off the light

*David L. Ulmer*



## THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN

You run  
around the garden  
In the bare-foot  
spring of life.  
And a young man  
smiles to see  
his little girl.



You prepare  
to go dating  
in the halcyon  
summer of life.  
And a man  
smiles to see  
his little girl.

You settle  
into a life-style  
to take you through  
the autumn years.  
And an old man  
smiles to see  
his little girl.

You exit  
from the world  
close your eyes  
to winter years.  
And the Father  
smiles to see  
His little girl.

*Nigel Nicholson*

## Melodic Sounds

melodic sounds  
ramble  
through my mind  
in a kaleidoscope of love  
spilling golden saxophones  
on the clouds

*Lynette K. Stephenson*

## Explanation

There are two ways to do everything  
and I have chosen mine-  
these are the sad poems  
I write about in my diary  
the hidden volume placed somewhere  
between the gun and the mattress springs

I take both out in December to  
consider the alternatives  
publish or perish  
or perish.

*Jim Allen*

## Submission

I have my assignment-  
I am writing toward the end  
of time in a straight line  
trying to fulfill the promise

The lyrics  
wrap around my tongue  
like a sour candy  
puckering the imitation of romance  
but delivering the heart's lost cause  
of chance

They are lighting my past  
and it follows me like  
gunpowder in a trail of smoke  
around my feet  
I am stomping on futile ground  
in an effort to hide what has always been  
and my soles reflect the burns  
of near misses

I am begging for sand to cover  
the tracks I made while dancing  
in the wrong house  
I am forgetting my social security number  
to avoid mistakes  
Everyone knows my initials  
there is too much identification  
for lost acts.

*Jim Allen*





GLASGOW

In the twilight years  
Of bygone giants  
Of explorers, traders, rulers.

Love  
In the twilight years  
Of a people.  
The waning wave  
Slapping the pebble shore.

Love  
Two lovely people  
Leave the citizens theatre  
And walk quickly through  
The cold night air.

*Nigel Nicholson*



## **My Friend**

I found you in a cold, lonely room  
And I took you to my heart  
Giving you the warmth that was there.  
I nursed you to health, feeding you compassion  
And love grew with the passing months.  
Time that was spent sharing an open field,  
The twisting air, and the tenderness of a caress.  
As I lie in bed, you give me a nudge  
And I hold your face in my palms and kiss your forehead.  
Your brown eyes glaze as you place your head on my shoulder  
And I laugh at myself  
For a romantic attachment to my dog.

*Donnie Boyett*

## **For Taylor**

I watched as he twirled  
like a spark  
and spoke uneasily  
of his "naturalness"

I peered through a plastic cup  
or over a cigarette butt  
held at a peculiar angle  
to shield my interest

He laughed at the way  
some men hide-  
I am hiding matches from myself  
afraid of "its" catching  
(an epidemic of drag)

all the while knowing  
I must strike my own fire.

*Jim Allen*

## BUGS

Eyes watch me move about the room  
From a trashcan where I threw the carcass.  
I can see the whip-like antennae  
Move back and forth from my couch.  
And a leg or two are twitching, try to get out to the floor.  
The separated head still has its jaws opening and closing  
In rage to the broken lattice of the wings.  
Clawing, trying to get to me. I know it is.  
I broke its body and now it won't die.  
I stare in its unblinking, black, beady eyes in horror.  
It moved! It moved!  
It's going to get me. I know it is.  
Kick the basket and have it and all the other garbage  
Scatter on the floor.  
It's crawling across the carpet  
Reaching with stalky legs and a big hooked claw.  
Slam its head with a shoe and grind it down.  
Is it dead?  
My nerves tingle as I go to bed hoping it won't move.  
And I sleep restlessly till I wake to scratching  
At the bedroom door.  
It's here!  
The dog attacks and eats the dismembered head.  
As I flick on the light  
The dog stares at me and his once brown eyes,  
Turn black.

*Donnie Boyett*



## Memories

I remember the look of your room  
Your books on the table  
Psychology for the mind  
Poetry for the soul  
Someone else's sweater in the chair  
I was a visitor, yes,  
but never a stranger  
I could touch your body  
but never your soul  
You would be a servant for someone's pleasure  
but never anyone's slave.  
I won't fall in love with you, you said  
So did I  
You made me see things I had never seen  
I learned from knowing you  
You told me things like no one ever had  
I grew from knowing you  
I won't fall in love with you, you said  
So did I  
I lied.

*David L. Ulmer*

## Heart of Vice

Honeysuckle fills the dark air  
bottle and lunar lamp past upon eve  
and now you and i and the waters calm  
blanketed by the foreign lights of god's domain  
distant tears trail into dust  
into dust.

My solemn gaze, emotion fine tuned  
a white moth circles ever slower  
her hopes fallen, flight broken  
she knows that which is dream  
and awakes to life at last  
at last.

And i thought you too were free  
but while i, in autumn of the night fell silent  
your tongue slipped while backbiting  
beautiful mystery quite virgin  
your smooth face has broken my faith  
my faith.

Silent ken capture my soul in the black of your eyes  
i know you love as nightshade flowers  
i dare embrace your bloom late night on distant roads  
when clouds are low  
and in your raging sea of love i will drown  
will drown.

*Mark Middlebrooks*



## Tattered I Hang

tattered I hang  
(waltzing velvet in the  
glass slivered window of autumn)  
and dizzy I'm drunk  
and smelling stong of the  
rotting love that  
effervesces and exhales  
from the bowels of this house  
to embrace a season  
that will squirm and groan  
to ooze bald and headfirst  
into yet another birth.

*Randy Logan*

## Autumn Rain

Lo, it is dark again.  
Billowy clouds cover the sky  
Hiding the glittering stars.  
Thunder, sounding in the distance,  
Tells of the coming storm.  
Cattle huddle beneath squirrels  
Scampering to an arboreal womb.  
Wind breathes down the collar;  
Leaves dance their whispers.  
Mist forms to tingle the skin,  
As fresh earthy smells relax the mind.  
Fill the lungs and enjoy the show.

*Donnie Boyett*





may

outside my window  
new green threads are loaded  
along silver lines

they are so slow  
if i go out tomorrow  
they will look the same

i feel weightless  
in this void where pictures and dreams  
are bumping into each other

if you were here  
i could forget the green beads  
i could leave my tea and pen on the table

*Billy Ray Gingles*

## Searching

Searching through empty wine bottles  
and shattered pieces of green glass  
the word alone seemed inadequate to reveal my solitude  
the smell of stale wine could  
Somewhere  
in this green loneliness  
was a prospect that I would never find  
Eventually I would drown  
in a wet drop of red  
found at the bottom of a lifetime

*Lynette K. Stephenson*

## Sundays

We went to church in separate cars  
so the neighbors wouldn't think we were snooty  
packed into father's new Cadillac  
all fish eyed and grinning

We sat in OUR section like a family  
singing off key always  
together  
Pretending to be rich  
I made out hot checks  
buying my way into Eden with a rubber snake



Afterwards,  
the complimentary meal at The Green Derby  
punctuated my mother's constant  
trips to the bathroom to regroup  
the after dinner Valium  
as blue as the boy who has written  
new lines to old songs.

*Jim Allen*

## AGRIVASHUN!

I hat peepel hoo jeast kant spel,  
Who putt a tee ensted of a ell,  
End tri end sown the werd out.

I hat peepel hoo jest kant rite,  
Hoo strugel and strugel wit al thar mite,  
To rite won singel werd.

To tri end desyfer skribels and skrawls  
Will driv me rite own up the wals  
Kriing end puling my hayr out!

Whin I sea al thozе mispeled werds  
End brochen konjunkshuns and misuzed vurbs,  
I thenk, "Egad, how gud thay wud bee  
If onley thay wud have lerned frum me!"

*Elizabeth Bailey*

## While Sailing in Thought

while sailing in thought  
a wave of curiosity  
tipped me  
into a sea of  
alphabet soup.

*Lynette K. Stephenson*





## DESERT

She is like a twisted tree  
growing too fast on one side,  
bride of a desert demon: dust devil.  
See them holding dusty caps  
snatching drinks of wind---  
junipers, light-twisted rend.  
Slender, slender tendril licking sweet air,  
tiny gray-green nodule,  
brimming tender.  
Blessed molecule, light there, on virgin bud,  
flood  
this cosmic moment!  
Lightning colored green!  
Yellow sun, urroar  
through the canyons,  
splashing life  
everywhere  
like living water bright yellow water turning green.

*Cecil E. Burns*

## SPRING CLEANING

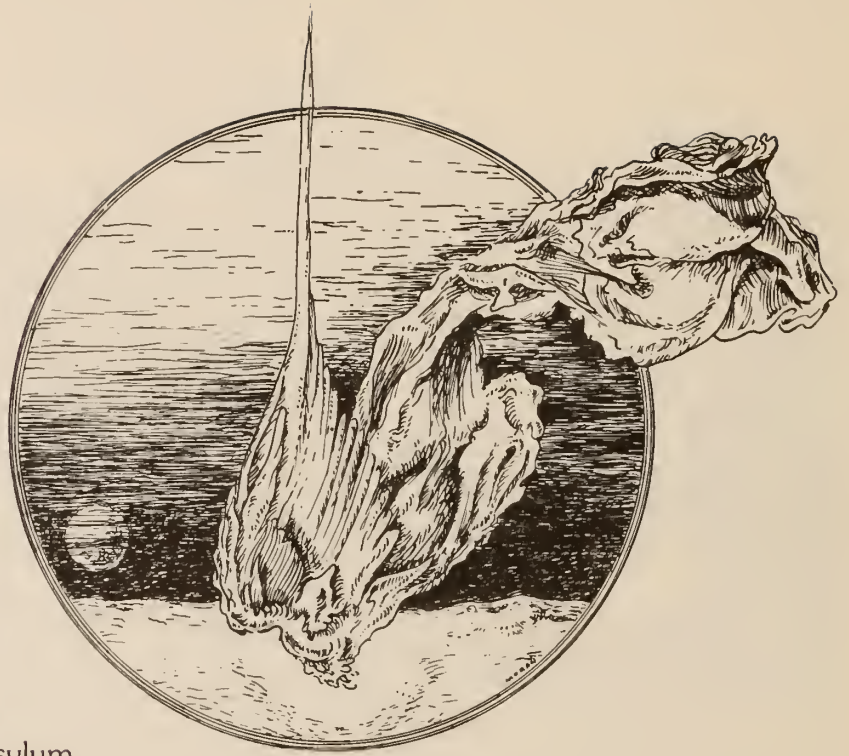
Spring cleaning is hard this year,  
For you came too near  
And my octopus heart rolled itself around you  
Like a small, angry fist.  
You choked in the flood of inky blood;  
Tentacle veins entangled you.  
My blood pounding in your ears  
Echoes in the tears I cry,  
For my heart has eaten you alive.  
Spring cleaning is hard in my heart.  
All old thrown out for new,  
Except that with which I hate to part:  
Like funny hats, legless teddybears, you.  
One night I will leave a moonless sea  
For a brighter lunar sky.  
I will stretch my heart from star to star,  
And hang it amid the constellations to dry.

*Cindy Totten*

## Civil Sigh

Firm, soft lips part to speak  
But a melody caresses my ear:  
My heart moves to the flow.  
A warm hand plays at my face:  
My mind clouds.  
I speak, but only whispers  
And you smile.  
Coarse hands reach  
And you kiss a trembling palm.  
Your eyes sparkle;  
Widen and narrow.  
Silken hair.  
Gentle form.  
I am content.

*Donnie Boyett*



## Luna

Summer cat fights passed  
reclining love tires yet refuses to die  
memories wander the labyrinthian asylum  
life can not flee from this eve of hollow streets  
defeat ripens as love in the eyes of the moon ascends  
peering behind black hair you love in the gray corner of insanity  
lady of the shadows your tempests haunt the quick  
a simple bard searches the depths of loneliness along green meadow roads  
he sleeps in open pastures deafly lit by she who so easily slays passion  
hide, hide from humanity the broken verses of your song  
he finds sanctuary from the sane lilt in the currents of his dreams  
and smiles upon those who would stand in trash and call themselves  
worthless  
take flight from the hard floors known by those who once had meaning  
the mad house image fades into desolation  
a poet lost in the heather of his mind  
after fugue on the angelic wings of night he will sing his life again.

*Mark Middlebrooks*

## URBAN ROMANTICISM

Where would you like to go, my dear,  
to get away from it all?  
Perhaps to New York City,  
to smell the garbage in the streets  
or to New Orleans to see  
the policemen walk off their beat.  
Firemen somewhere must be out on strike;  
if we found them,  
we could watch houses burn down at night.  
To the Texas Gulf Coast  
to see oil slide up from the sea,  
or to Los Angeles,  
and try to guess where the stars might be.  
How about to Florida,  
to hear the executioner's call?  
Where would you like to go, my dear, to get away from  
it all?

*David L. Ulmer*

## A GALLON OF GAS

A gallon of gas  
Is a pain in the ass  
And last place I go  
Is the Last Picture Show  
To see the dead country  
And the teary-eyed soldier  
Come home from a war  
With a new acquaintance  
(Who are they, Ozzie?)

Railroads dry up  
Like old falling leaves  
And picture postcards  
Droop on the trees  
They never make oil  
From crude tin foil  
Gallon is the way  
They measure miles  
and whiles  
and  
naturally  
smiles.

In a book I read, it says:

The place is grace  
The grace is face  
A face will place  
A kind of space  
Betwixt the place  
the case  
and Grace.

Hand me the mace.

*Grayson Harper*

## SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, IS TRYING TO FORGET ME

Pieces of my soul, forever removed, suffer neglect, and atrophy;  
Abandoned for bittersweet memories.

Phantom passion issues the screams of a severed love,  
echoing through canyons of past dreams,  
fading, without effect, in the vast eroding valley  
that was once a growing mountain.

The image of that desperate love, unrealized,  
now lies in a cocoon of the finest silken strands  
of fantasy reinforcement, spun by disillusionment;  
Out of sight, camouflaged by time and distance;  
left to die from exposure to the chill of avoidance,  
Or, perhaps,  
to metamorphosize with gradual acceptance,  
Someday to mature and emerge with new life,  
a beautiful, heretofore unrecognized entity!  
I continue to hope, to try to dream again;

My dreams don't cooperate.  
Does she touch me in her dreams?  
Do I exist in her dreams? If not,  
I may not exist at all.  
Is it my fate to wait for a fate which was never mine?

*Richard G. Mason*





## **The fight**

If you care,  
    give me a call.  
If not,  
    forget it.  
She called,  
    but does she care?  
She walked through the door,  
    with a sweet smile on her face.  
God how she's hurt me  
    but God how much I love her,  
    how much I need her.  
She needed me to hold her.  
    I could tell,  
    but I hurt too much inside.  
The hours passed,  
    and we fought  
    saying things that cut deep into our hearts.  
If we care for one another,  
    why the hurt?  
She rose to go to the door,  
    I followed.  
    We talked a little more.  
As we talked we drew close  
    the cutting words of the past hours blocked out.  
She grasped my hands tightly,  
    we looked into one another's eyes for a few seconds.  
Her head rested on my shoulder  
    and I drew her close to me  
    as we held each tight.  
The hurt forgotten but not buried.  
I can't wait for the funeral.

--Anonymous

## **Sometimes I Don't Understand Why** *(Poem for David)*

Sometimes I don't understand why  
    We never talked,  
    We never tried,  
Sometimes I don't understand why  
    We always laughed, but  
    We always lied,  
Sometimes I don't understand why  
    We tried to love,  
    Perhaps we died,  
Sometimes I don't understand why....

*Leslie A. Gregory*

## I COULD

I could,  
in my failures and self-pity,  
allow myself to envy  
those who travel,  
without a stumble,  
down the yellow brick road  
toward emerald towers of apparent  
happiness, fulfillment, and success.  
But what need have I  
of Oz,  
ruby slippers,  
or gilded trinkets  
tossed out by a wizard?  
Why wish for  
a stronger heart to weaken me,  
a wiser brain to confound me,  
or greater courage to drag me,  
ultimately,  
into the depths of cowardice?  
Why drudge along the way of ambition!  
Instead,  
let me tramp the unpaved path  
through poisonless, poppyless meadows  
where  
unworried, unpressed, unhurried,  
at peace,  
I may breathe  
the purer air of clearer skies  
and sleep  
unhaunted in my dreams  
by flying monkeys  
and screaming, green-faced ladies.

*Millard Bienvenu*

## CONCLUSION

From the field I see a crow  
flying impatiently overhead.  
But he will land  
soon enough  
to pluck the carcasses  
strewn along the highway.

*Millard Bienvenu*

**do you make windows**

Although it's well known,  
That when dead you're placed beneath a stone  
and the king stepped down from the throne,  
Do you make windows for dreamers to look through  
With faults that only glass makers can find?  
And while the writers were free-lancing,  
Mark began dancing  
Still the painted ponies were prancing,  
Do you make windows for dreamers to look through  
With faults that only glass makers can find?  
While we were looking,  
Billy started his booking  
And Shakespeare started dinner cooking,  
Could you make windows for dreamers to look through  
without a fault for anyone to see...  
But me.

*Leslie A. Gregory*







## SEGAL

### I

This morning early, Segal and I at the park  
Fishing the pond with a few feet of line  
And safety-pin he keeps in his pocket.  
Rain falls, lightly wetting the grass;  
The dampness draws out the smell of sweat  
And wine inside my coat. Segal is wet, too,  
As he whistles a tune, "You made me love you...."  
Trees so fresh you can taste the bark, the twigs, the leaves.  
In the distance, thunder rattles like Colossus  
Clearing his throat. A fat man swaggers up from the woods  
With cane pole and bucket filled with seven catfish.  
He smiles through the gaps in his teeth  
At Segal's safety-pin hook,  
The grasshopper morbidly flipping its legs.  
With the faith of a monk, Segal dangles  
The grasshopper over the water and says:  
"I once caught a twelve-pound carp with a cough-drop."  
We all begin laughing.  
The fat man performs a small dance around Segal and me,  
Clapping, singing, his bare feet glistening  
In the dew of the grass. And after the dance,  
Bends heavy, perspiring, to the pail,  
Bringing forth one golden catfish  
Which he drops in Segal's hands.  
(You should have seen the look on my friend's face!)  
Segal then draws out his knife, the cat's head  
Gets chopped, the belly split open,  
Guts jerked out with a flick of his finger.  
The fat man, cracking laughter, lumbers off  
Through the trees, swinging the bucket and  
His big arms. The leaves of the fuchsia and hackberry  
Still quiver after he is gone, and Segal--  
Forgetting about the fish for awhile,  
Falls asleep on the grass by the green pond.

## II

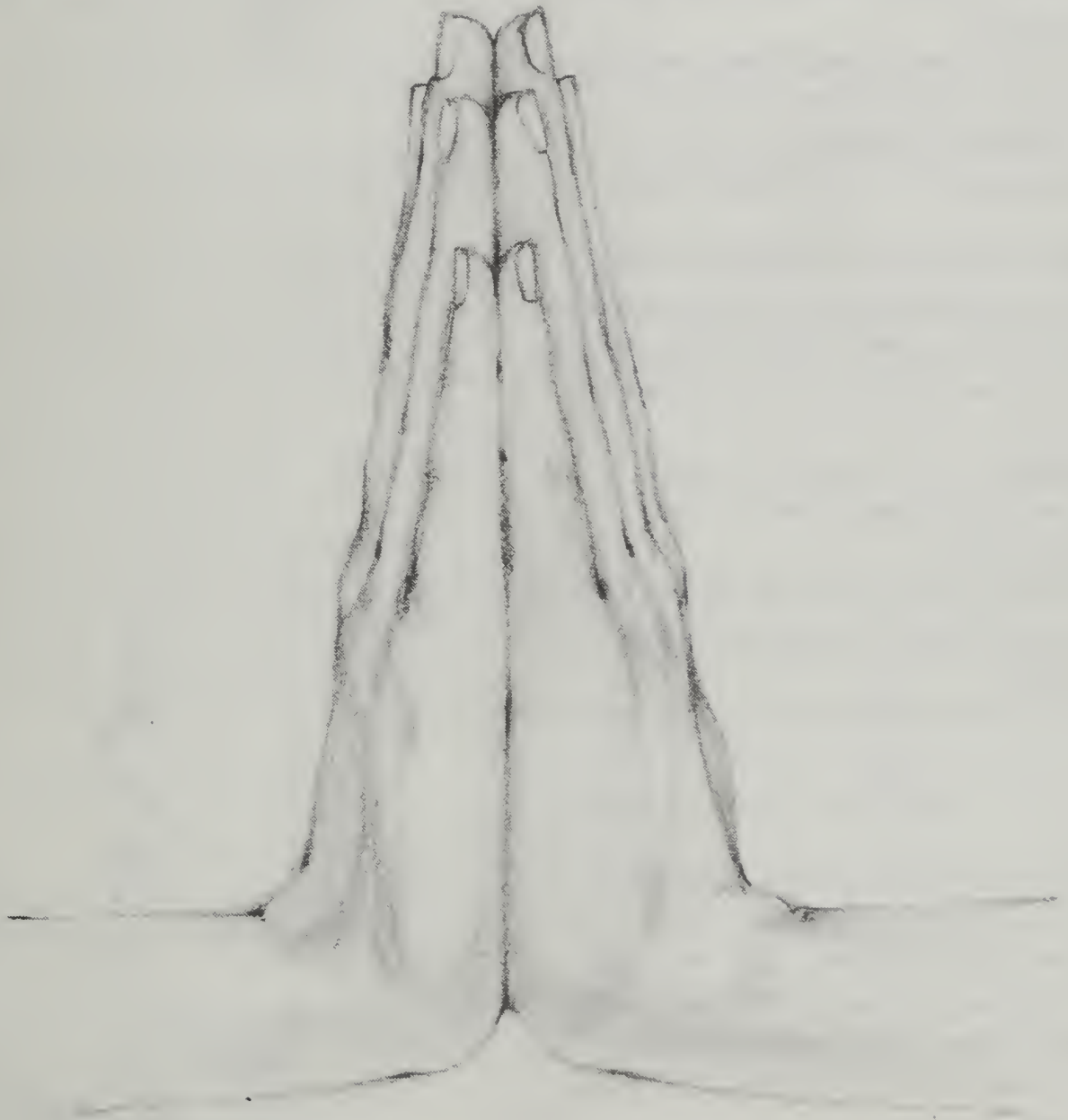
This evening late, I don't know,  
Haven't seen Segal since early this morning.  
I go to his place, but he isn't around.  
Only a few lumps of clothing inhabit the floor.  
Outside, the rain dumps two inches on everything,  
Clouds piled overhead like rows of ghastly condemned buildings.  
Segal, it seems, owed two months' back rent.  
The landlady is angry. Flies down the hall  
Banging on doors, firing questions at his neighbors  
Who stare at her with blank eyes.  
His brother shows up with a fifth of Jack Daniels  
And no idea what's happened;  
They were going to a movie, he says.  
An old woman, huddled in the hall in her robe  
And her hair wrapped in a towel,  
Says she hasn't seen Segal for days. I tell her,  
"I just saw him this morning, we went fishing together."  
A man wearing a visor says  
He heard Segal was going to Phoenix on the bus.  
"But he left everything here!" his brother starting to cry.  
We all stand around quiet while the landlady calls the police.  
But when they arrive, all they can do is impound what he owns.  
She charges behind them hollering, cursing them. Finally,  
They go away, profoundly shaking their heads.  
And she says to me:  
"Where is he, your friend, Segal, where has he gone?"

But I have no idea.

*Grayson Harper*







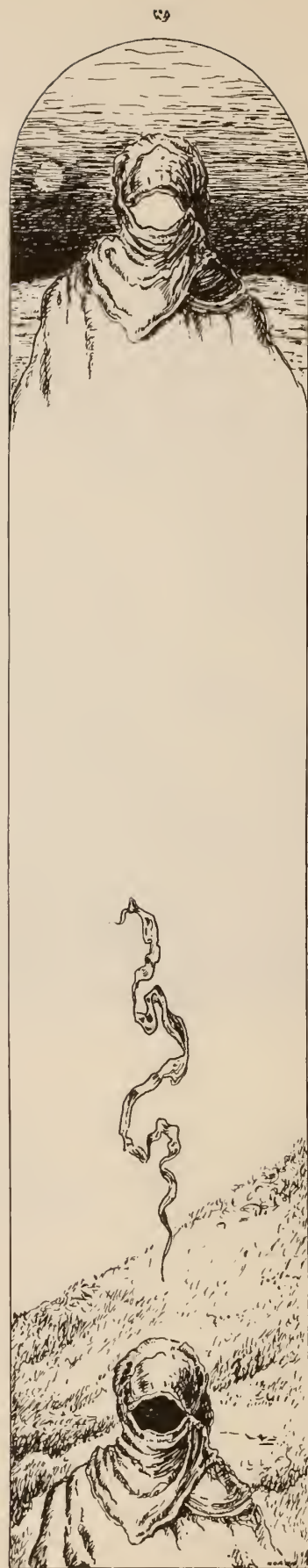
## PRIMOGENITURE

Bus ride was slow crossing town tonight.  
At his house, it starts snowing again;  
I see his truck parked outside, keys  
    in the ignition;  
Calling his name, but no reply. Must have  
Walked off somewhere, the old fool.  
Just let me inside so I can warm my hands.  
Maybe he left a note, directions what to do?

    No, not a jot.  
But I told him I was coming! Table bare,  
Dog stretched by the stove; Old Alma's  
    got more sense than him,  
To go tromping off in the wind and snow.

Well, can't be gone long, fresh pot of coffee,  
Potatoes peeled and waiting. An odd bird he is,  
Old Jake's got no sense leaving things this way.  
But you get like that living alone, peculiar,  
    they say;  
Like old books no one wants to read,  
Names worn from their covers, no clue  
    to what's inside.  
People laugh, they say, "It's just his nature."  
I say nature's nothing. But just try to tell  
    an old man  
About his house, his dog, the snow, or anything!

Look how she cocks her ear when I say Jake's  
    name.  
And barely cracks an eye. Oh, she's crazy  
As he is, living here so long. But sly.  
Trusts me, I think, in a way Jake never did.  
Dogs can sense who their friends are, you know;  
Even now, knows what I'm talking about.  
Rather be with her than him, for all he ever  
    gave me:  
A riddle, a shrug, a naked stare. Better off  
Passing the day with a rock. Or if he spoke  
    at all, wasn't it mostly  
To contradict, trip me up, make me a fool?





Talks to himself, you know. Yeah! Like a  
parrot or a hoot-owl!  
Parades around naked in front of the dog.  
Plays with himself, too, I'll wager,  
Old impotent bastard, old wino beggar!  
And what did he ever give you, Alma?  
Well, we've got potatoes and pork chops  
and navy beans,  
I'll cook them myself if he doesn't come soon.  
But what's this? His boots by the stove,  
Hat and coat hung on the nail. Maybe I'll  
try them on for size.  
Why, you think he paid for them? With his  
hot checks  
And his Jesus-club-meal-ticket? Old yella bee

With his shy beggar-way? No, not one dime  
for shoes or coat;  
I doubt a nickel for the hat. You see,  
Such things, he says, "don't have no value."  
"What are we?" says he.  
And what's he going to say about them, now?  
to me? To you? To the tree?  
Nice fur lining. Thick rubber soles. Of course,  
Jake would have the best. What a funny guy.  
Used to be a clown in the circus, you know.  
Oh, I could tell you stories. Of his twisted arm,  
The scar on his abdomen....

Only, look out there, now, is that him  
from far off?  
Or a speck on the snow? --And how he  
Used to say, "Remember me to your wife!"  
Whether you had one or not, man or woman,  
he always said it.  
Maybe I ought to look around, maybe he's here.  
Maybe I better turn up the fire.  
Front door seems loose, somehow.  
Wonder if the radio works?  
Alma's old, but she's okay (I always liked  
her).  
Come on, old girl, what do you say?  
Let's have a potato, the world is new!  
One for me and one for you.



And wag your tail and scratch the flea;  
This hour we share with the better classes;  
Countries and kings go along like me!  
For what is theirs but what is given them?

What mine, but what I take?

Look out my window and you'll see strangers  
passing there;

The truck and the keys the same as years ago,  
Ice kissing the windshield, sliding down.

And the radio and the roof (everything  
in its time);

Not to mention the magazines and the loose  
change and the moon;

And the box by the back steps, the wallpaper;

The photograph of his father, the scrapbook  
of his mother;

The girl in high school, and the woman  
in the next room;

The dirty shirts, the dust in the drawers,

The shoes, the shave-cream, the sound of the dog  
scratching,

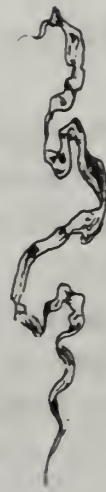
And the sound that the window makes at night  
when the wind howls....

These endless miles I've ridden with strangers  
through the night,

Through the snow and the talk, have finally  
led me here.

Besides, nobody knows him like I do,  
except maybe, the wind in the trees.

*Grayson Harper*



## ANONYMOUS

I have no identity.  
My face, my features  
A blur.  
My mind, my soul  
Transparent.

I am inconsequential.  
A crumb on a feast table,  
A grain of sand on the beach,  
A drop of water in a lake,  
A single planet in the Universe.

I cry out, "See me!"  
But no one sees.  
I shout out, "Hear me!"  
But no one listens.  
I plead, "Love me,"  
But no one cares.

No one wants me,  
I do not belong.  
A huge, invisible  
Bundle of pain, I am  
Anonymous.

*Elizabeth Bailey*

## Side Stroke

I am swimming the side stroke  
dear Mother--  
because fins do not sprout  
from wounds  
nor whiskers from a dead cat  
once the guts are out of it

I am swimming with my wounds  
underneath  
hoping the salt will nurse me  
numbing the sting  
My lungs are filled for ballast  
stretched balloon-thin  
There is no advantage to floating  
like an hors d'oeuvre  
keeping my bad side down  
praying for smooth currents  
I am swimming the side stroke  
for the thrill  
greater than the prize  
or the biggest catch.

*Jim Allen*





# Kimberly

David L. Ulmer



The cold granite slab did no justice to the once beautiful life buried underneath it. I was the only one at the funeral, other than Billy Bear, who knew the real person. To the priest and the undertaker she was just another body, another lost soul. But to me and Billy she was part of our lives.

I was six when she was born. I sneaked into the nursery to look at her. She was beautiful, black hair covered her head, and her eyes were big chocolate drops. I tapped on the window and she smiled at me. Papa said later that it was just gas, but I knew it was a smile.

Mama named her Kimberly. Papa said he didn't care, he had really wanted another son. Papa said girls only made good wives and mothers, and he didn't need either when the farm work needed to be done.

I loved her. She was the most beautiful and wonderful thing I had ever seen. I learned to take care of her, to feed her and change her as soon as I could. Mama seemed glad for me to do it, she was always going off somewhere with Papa and leaving me to take care of Kimberly. Neither one of them was home the day she spoke her first word, "Bubba."

"Get me something please, Bubba," Kimberly begged, pulling on my pants leg, as we walked through the October fair side show. "Please get me something, please, please."

"What do you want, Kim? And quit pulling on my pants, you're going to tear them."

"I want everything," she laughed.

"You can't have everything," I told her sternly. "Pick out one thing and I'll try to get it

for you."

"I want a bear," she said, pointing to a large panda behind the baseball throw game counter.

I paid my quarter and picked up the two balls. I missed everything on my first throw. "Please, Bubba," Kimberly begged from behind me. I gripped the ball and threw with all the strength my twelve-year-old body had. I hit the bottles square in the middle, sending them flying in all directions. "Hurrah, hurrah for Bubba!" Kimberly yelled as I handed her the bear. "I'll name him Billy, Billy Bear. I'll sleep with him every night. Thank you so much, Bubba, I love you."

We were trusted companions, Kimberly, Billy and I. We had our own special world, and as we grew older we shared each other's secrets and dreams.

"What do you want to be?" Kimberly asked me.

"I want to be a lawyer," I answered, "like Perry Mason."

"I want to be an actress," Kimberly said. "A great and famous actress. I want people to recognize me and love me."

"I love you, Kim."

"I know you do, big brother; you and Billy are all I care about."

Papa could never understand our dreams. He was a farmer. His life began at planting season and ended at harvest. Foolishness was what he called my plans, and pure stupidity was what he said whenever Kimberly mentioned anything about acting. When I left for college, the only thing he said to me was

that he hoped I got it out of my system before the crops came in, and that with me gone Kim might just realize how foolish her dreams were.

Kimberly and I wrote to each other constantly after I went away to school. She told me that Papa had become very different since I had left, not talking much and almost never mentioning me. Whenever Mama brought up my name Papa would just leave the room, Kim said.

I felt sad for Kimberly, being by herself with Papa like he was. She had written me that he had become very strict with her, hardly even letting her leave the house. Whenever she mentioned anything about acting he would fly into a rage, yelling and screaming at her. I was glad that she had Billy, at least; he would take care of her until I could see her again.

I was in my second year of law school when Kimberly called me and told me that she had run away from home. She had wanted to be in the school play, but Papa had said “no” and had threatened to lock her in her room if she

said anything about it again.

“Please go home, Kim, Mama and Papa are worried about you.” I pleaded with her.

“That’s a lie and you know it,” Kimberly said. “You are the only one that really cares about me and what I want to do. I need to see you, I miss you so much, please let me come to see you. I love you, big brother.”

“All right, Kim, ” I said, “I’ll be waiting for you.”

It was two days later when the policeman called. He told me that Kimberly had been killed by someone who had lost control of his car while she had been crossing the street, three blocks from where I lived. My name and address and a big stuffed panda bear were all she had with her. I called Mama and Papa but Mama said that Papa had a very bad cold and the doctor didn’t want him out of bed, so they weren’t there for the funeral.

As the funeral home truck drove away, I knelt down beside the grave with Billy Bear in my arms. “Goodbye, baby sister, I love you.” I said. Then Billy and I started to cry.



# STUDENT INPUT

*Colleen Claire Cook*

NOTE: This is a copy of an actual letter sent to the Registrar's Office by myself. Only the facts are true. No names have been changed to protect the innocent.

Dear REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER:

INPUT: This letter is from 434-86-6457 (a humanoid sometimes going by the alias Colleen Claire Cook).

INPUT: You should be ashamed of yourself...no self-respecting COMPUTER would continually do to a humanoid what you have done to 434-86-6457 ...

L\*O\*G\*...

SUMMER, 1978:

INPUT: 434-86-6457 re-enters NSU after three-year absence...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 has grade of F (3 hours pursued-0 hours earned-0 quality points) in History 101, dating back to Spring, 1975...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 repeats course...

INPUT: REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER gives 434-86-6457 hours earned...

INPUT: REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER does not erase F (3 hours pursued-0 hours earned-0 quality points) awarded to 434-86-6457 in 1975...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 informs humanoids in Registrar's Office of error...Humanoids assure 434-86-6457 error will be corrected...

DECEMBER, 1978:

INPUT: 434-86-6457 is candidate for graduation...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 picks up grades early...Above mentioned error has not been corrected...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 again informs humanoids in Registrar's Office of error...is assured it will be corrected.

INPUT: 434-86-6457 graduates...

LATE DECEMBER, 1978:

INPUT: 434-86-6457 receives grades in mail...

INPUT: Above mentioned mistake corrected...

INPUT: New error substituted for old error...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 given 30 hours, 102 quality points for Fall Semester, 1978...double what 434-86-6457 earned...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 delighted...

JANUARY, 1979:

INPUT: 434-86-6457 returns to NSU for Bachelor's...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 decides to report mistake...(434-86-6457 dismayed)...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 informs humanoids in Office of new error...

INPUT: Humanoids assure 434-86-6457 new



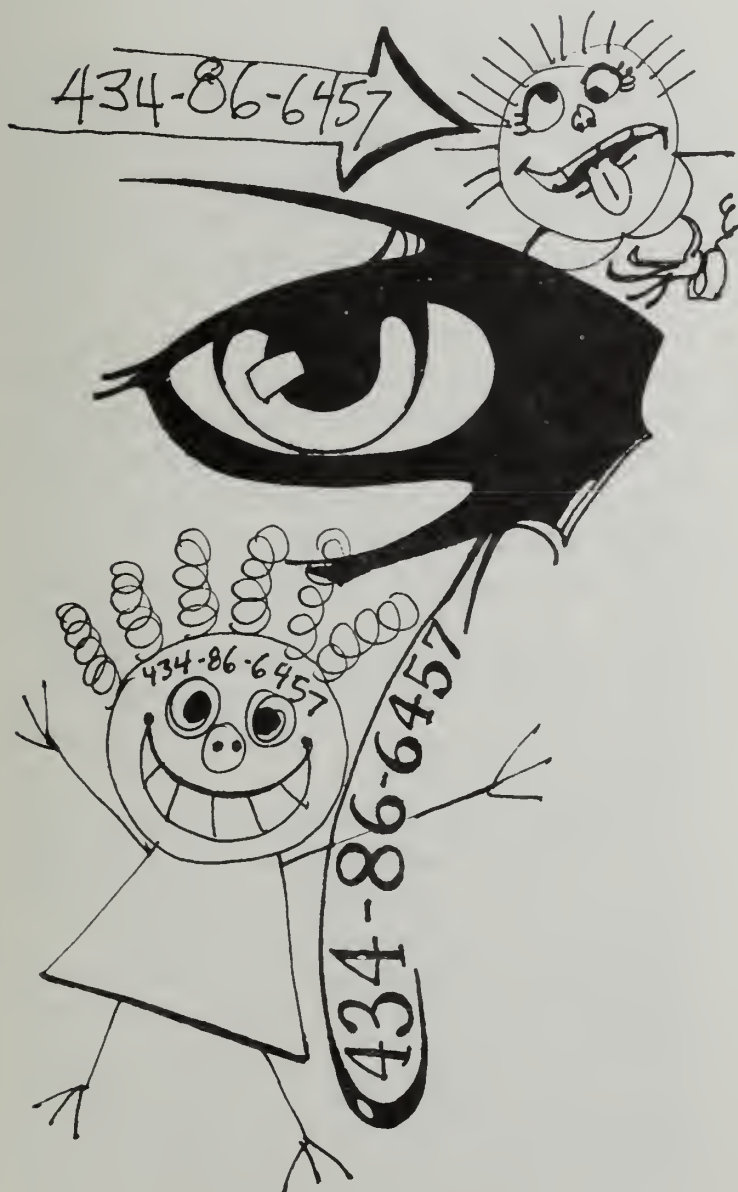
error will be corrected...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 is not allowed to talk to REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER...

MAY, 1979:

INPUT: 434-86-6457 receives grades...

INPUT: Above error corrected...Extra hours and quality points inappropriately given are taken away...



INPUT: So are the hours and quality points actually earned by 434-86-6457 in Fall, 1978...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 goes B\*O\*N\*K\*E\*R\*S...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 considers transferring schools...Decides against it...Would probably get a messed up transcript and not be allowed in new school...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 considers staging a one-humanoid sit-in against REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER...Decides against it...434-86-6457 would probably go unnoticed and may eventually become considered part of the office furniture...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 considers suicide...Decides against it...434-86-6457 hates the sight of blood...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 comes up with Better Idea...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 will write letter to Bed Lam, president of the Artoo Detoo Fan Club, recommending that REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER'S membership be discontinued...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 does it...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 hopes this letter will explain to REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER why the above mentioned membership is being cancelled...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 also hopes to encourage REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER to get 434-86-6457's record straight...

INPUT: 434-86-6457 hopes no more drastic measures will have to be taken against REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER...like shipping REGISTRAR'S COMPUTER off to a new assignment...at Welfare Office...

Yours in programming,

434-86-6457  
434-86-6457

# Never Lost --- Just Temporarily Disoriented

Anonymous



Oh God, please, it can't be morning yet. I burrowed down beside Alex and hid my head, ignoring the persistent shriek of the alarm. Alex groaned and pushed at me

"Will you turn the damn thing off? I don't have to get up." Clenching teeth and fist, I reached to hit the clock with fury and frustration.

Six o'clock. I gazed down at the half buried head of the man who loved and protected me through a divorce and custody suit in which the only things I escaped with were my sanity

and freedom from Helen, a mother-in-law who taught the Borgias everything they know. Now after all the hurt and pain had lessened, I had foolishly agreed to walk back into her house and take care of my son till school started for me.

My son--that little wonder that was created from something once good. The quiet mornings when I held Sean, rocking in rhythm to his soft breathing. His father humming in a low voice, filled with love for us. Sometime in our two years together those scenes became less frequent, and then his father wouldn't even be home. He had no time for us. Helen never did understand why I finally left. When the divorce became final, I needed time for me, so I let Sean go to his grandmother for the summer.

I lay back down. Just five more minutes to draw strength, won't matter. Prolonging it won't help either, but that didn't convince me to leave my bed of warmth, my womb.

Six-fifteen. OK, Sarah, you've put it off long enough. I left the bed and found the bathroom hostile. Turning on the shower led to the discovery of a small trickle of water. "Damn." I looked back at the bed--oh, no, you don't. I shoved my legs into my jeans and grabbed my favorite T-shirt, which I knew would irritate Helen. Good. I put up my hair and headed for the front door, pausing five more minutes to take hold of myself and say goodbye to a slightly incoherent sweetheart.

As I fiddled with the car radio I thought what



three months with Helen could have done to Sean. Would she in that time turn my son against me? He was so young and trusting. Holding out his boo-boos for me to kiss and make better. Bringing me a picture of a donkey and listening intently while I tried to explain that it wasn't a horse. She seemed to be doing just that though in what little time she had. The last time I had talked to him he didn't even call me mommy. "I don't need this hurt!" That's good, Sarah, shouting to yourself in the middle of town. I turned down Helen's street.

I opened Helen's door looking for traps. "Mommy's here, Sean," I called out. "Hello Sarah, you look--- well." Helen in her ever manicured state entered with my reluctant son trailing behind her. "Say hello to mommy, Sean. She's going to take care of you while Nana goes to work." "Hi." Just a hi, take care of you? I didn't like the sound of this already. I thought of my bed and resented Alex in it without me, resented that Sean was all I had that was mine. Sean didn't replace the love I had lost with his father. It was a special love we had, in which we both gave and took. We were equals lost in an unsettled life. We helped each other over a situation most can never understand.

Seven o'clock. Nine more hours of this. It's not going to work. Helen doesn't want me here, reclaiming what is mine. She was afraid to lose the love of her grandson, which she had carefully cultivated in the last three months. But I had two years of his memories and I would not give up those or him.

"I've stocked all his favorite juices in here and his clean clothes are in his room." Trying to make the best of a situation that made me more of a babysitter than Sean's mother, I nodded politely to Helen. "I'm quite sure, Helen, that after two years of living with Sean we'll get along fine." Two years. What's that to anyone? It was everything to me. He was a part of me I didn't want to deny. I never did. Why should I give up? You're starting to get belligerent, Sarah. Take it easy, Sean will see it. I tried to calm down.

Helen turned away and countered, "I'm

sure you will. Well, I'd better get going; come here, Sean, and give Nana a kiss bye-bye." With that the rest of my calm fell in pieces around me as Sean grabbed his grandmother, begging her through tears not to leave him here. "Honey, Nana has to leave, come on, we'll fix breakfast and eat with Captain Kangaroo." That worked. Thank God for Captain Kangaroo.

Sean pedalled off in search of trouble, and I finally tracked down the skillet and started the bacon. Opening the fridge I found that Helen had indeed "stocked all his favorite juices." Ignoring them, I took two eggs and milk. A small but persistent tug at my leg broke in on my thoughts of Alex and sleep. "I thirsty-hungry." "Sean, don't whine at me, I'm fixing eggs and bacon and some nice milk. How's that sound?" I was trying to placate but my voice was rising. How many times had we gone through these morning scenes?

"NO! I want cereal." "Look, you're getting what I'm making and that's it." Sean started to cry. "Chocolate milk?" I was wheedling now and angry.

Seven-forty-five. I slammed the plate on his high chair in the dining room and went back for the milk. It was all out war now. I pulled Sean up from his tantrum on the floor and half-dragged him to his chair. "Sean, we're going to move your chair inside and watch the Captain." "NO!" Sean grabbed the milk and threw it. "Look what you've done!" It was no use, I was screaming now. "The white walls, the rug, your grandmother is going to kill me! I'm going to kill you!" Sean tore off down the hall shrieking for his Nana as I went shrieking off into the kitchen for a sponge.

Eight o'clock. My tears mixing with the milk, I knelt down to sponge up as much of the damage as I could. But the sponge didn't quite reach the damage I had just done. It's not fair. Where was the little boy of three months ago? Doesn't he want me anymore? He's running for his Nana, his protector. Mine was asleep. And as I knelt there, two small arms reached around me, holding me close. "I love you, mommy."



# SUMMERTIME BLUES

*Glenn Lemoine*

He leaned forward and placed both hands firmly on the counter top, spread his fingers, and shifted the weight of his body off of his feet and on to his arms. He looked out of the side door which stood open. He watched the cars in the street and the people on the sidewalks. He noted the old men who sat across the street on benches placed in front of a deserted, weather-beaten old store and drank warm wine out of bottles in brown paper bags. He let out a long sigh and thought about white sandy beaches, clear blue waters, and cool breezes. He continued to stare out the door and day dream. He was looking at nothing in particular when he saw a slight figure dart through the crowd on the sidewalk across the street. The traffic light which hung above the intersection of the two streets changed colors. The traffic on the street along side of the store came to a halt, and the traffic on the street which ran in front of the store roared to life. He watched as the figure stepped off the sidewalk and worked his way across the street towards the store, through the idle cars, hurrying to cross the street before the light changed.

He looked about the inside of the store, at the ceiling-high row of shelves stocked with bourbon, Scotch, whiskey, gin, vodka, and wines. He felt like a prisoner in a cell with wall to wall booze. "Working and going to summer school is a drag," he mused. A week ago he had decided to enroll for the summer semester at the university. He had gotten a part-time job at the liquor store to pay for his

living expenses. It all seemed rational and logical at the time. But now he had doubts about the decision he made.

The two previous summers he had spent chasing around the Gulf of Mexico on a crew boat, delivering supplies to oil rigs. He missed sitting on the stern of a boat in the late afternoon, getting stoned, and watching the orange red sun slowly sink into the deep blue waters of the gulf. He thought about how good it felt to tie up at the dock, knowing that your seven days on board were over and that you would be getting off. The sense of adventure he had felt when he picked up his check at the office and then threw his suitcase in the back of his dirty Volkswagen and took off for anywhere he felt like going.

Now he looked through the large plate glass windows that made up the front entrance of the store. Through the reddish glare of the setting sun he saw the same slim figure he had watched cross the street a few moments earlier approach the glass doors at the entrance of the store. As the figure yanked open the door he remembered seeing him come into the store on the two previous days. He remembered the same scowl on the face and the way the eyes darted nervously about the store. He watched as the figure padded across the dirty yellowed tile floor on bare feet. The soiled baggy work pants, the oil-stained t-shirt with a hole in the stomach all seemed familiar. The figure striding toward the counter struck him as elf-like, not too tall, kind of skinny with a small round head and

large ears that stuck out. He thought the face on the figure looked impatient and unhappy. He looked closely at the slight figure of a man who stood before him at the counter. He noted the deep lines in the face and forehead, the scraggly mustache and the unkept hair, the unshaven cheeks and chin. There was a long scar on his right cheek and the nose looked as though it had been broken at one time. He looked at the thick film of glaze which covered the man's eyes. The glaze came from too much alcohol for too long a period of time. All of the blood vessels of the eyes were engorged with blood so that the eyes were red, blood shot, yellow and cloudy all at once. He asked himself, "How in the hell does this guy see to get around?" He was aware of the smell of cheap bourbon and body odor. The man stood at the counter with both hands on the top and muttered something through broken yellow teeth. He forced a smile and said, "What's that you want?"

The man looked impatient and repeated his order in a rambling, muttering, incoherent manner. He blinked and tried to look as though he understood what the man had said. He thought it sounded like the man had ordered a galvanized bucket. He turned away from the counter and walked over to one of the other clerks who had been working in the store for several months. The clerk was busy stacking six-packs into an upright cooler with a sliding glass door. Somewhat obsequiously and quietly he said to the clerk, "I can't understand what this guy says; maybe you can take his order."

The clerk, who was kneeling on one knee and placing six-packs at the far end of the bottom shelf of the cooler, cast a glance at the impatient figure on the other side of the counter. The clerk smiled in recognition and said, "Get him a half pint of Kentucky Creme - that's what he usually wants." He walked over to the ceiling-high row of shelves where the various bottles of liquor sat. He scanned the shelves up and down looking for Kentucky Creme. After a while he heard a sort of grunting sound from the other side of the

counter. He looked over at the man, who was pointing to one of the bottom shelves near the counter. He looked in the direction that the man was pointing and saw sitting next to a bottle of Bourbon County a bottle of Kentucky Creme. He walked over to the shelf, reached down, and grabbed the bottle by its short neck. He turned and walked over to the cash register thinking to himself, "I bet this stuff will make his liver quiver." He withdrew a small brown bag from the shelf underneath the cash register. He slipped the bottle into the paper bag and walked over to the man, who was digging into his pants pockets. As he watched the man fumble through his clothes looking for change, he thought about the paradox the man presented. The man was drinking to escape from a reality he could not cope with. Alcohol provided the man with a world to escape to, but ultimately it would be a world he could not escape from. In his mind's eye he could see the man trapped inside of a whiskey bottle, like a specimen sitting on a shelf in a biology lab. It occurred to him that the liquor store itself was lab-like. A place where for several hours each day he worked around and observed these curiosities of human nature. A wave of realization swept over him. It was cold and sobering. He was there for the summer only. The store was part of the man's life.

He looked at the stooped-shouldered man before him and wryly smiled at his own thoughts. He handed the small brown bag to the man and said, "That'll be a dollar thirty."

The man placed five quarters and a nickel on the countertop. The man's hands trembled as he reached out and wrapped his bony fingers about the paper bag. The man put the bottle in the back pocket of his messy pants and turned away from the counter. With the same nervous, quick steps that he used coming in, the man padded towards the door on his bare feet. He watched the man walk out the door and disappear into the traffic of the street. Looking up at the clock he noted dourly that it was going to be a long way before closing time.



# MADAM, I'M NOT WELL

*Cindy Totten*

Something bizarre has happened to me. Insidiously, a disease has crept into my system. I eat, sleep, and bathe sporadically. Classes are extracurricular. I stay in comfortably dark places, emerging into direct sunlight only to cringe and blink, my skin paler than ever before. I speak a new language of interpretation, projection, blocking, gobos, fresnels, and ellipsoidals. I spend much of my time cheating out and "dutchman"-ing. My wardrobe is textured and I sport staples in my shoes and sawdust under my nails. Oftimes in the midst of tizzying-out, I bounce off the proscenium walls and spout Shakespeare.

I have become one of those theatre people.

I always attended plays here, but have only recently become totally involved with them. Whether I'm out in the audience, backstage, or onstage, I am smitten with theatre life.

The three main aspects of theatre life at NSU are directing, acting, and technical work. I directed ten high school students (known lovingly as "no-necked monsters") in a one-act play this summer. As a director, I had to block all the action on stage, instruct the players in interpretation of the lines, and sit in the audience chewing my sawdust-flavored nails as my show was going on. I had to fight from directing the audience members as to when they should laugh or cry. In restaurants,

I found myself starting to pick up a glass with my "downstage" hand (the one towards the audience) and would correct myself and use my "upstage" hand. I found new aspects of myself; no longer was I mild-mannered Sandra Dee. Not anymore. I became a blonde banshee shrieking directions to my kids onstage. I wrote manic verse for crisis theatre:

I am smitten with the stage.  
I love to strut and fret.  
But I'm sweating while I'm fretting  
And smutting more than strutting  
These director days.

Cheat out, we shout,  
And they cheat in:  
Theatre sin.

I learned to cuss without flinching and said things like "theatre corrupts." But when it was all over and I was left with a yellow rose and no no-necks, I had to admit something had been accomplished. Directing builds character, and character was spilling from my eyes then, for I had made it.

Acting is another way of creating character: for the actor himself and for his role. Theatre people are masochists, striving to perfect their believability with every show. It has been said that theatre is not a real world. I say it is very



real, for the emotions of the players are honest and sincere ones. And the feelings of theatre people for one another are very real. They have to be, for often it is only theatre people who understand devoting so much love, time, and effort to what is whimsy to those with "real" jobs. Nowhere but in NSU's emergency theatre can you see Friar Lawrence fling Juliet's dagger accidentally into the audience, with Balthasar retrieving it for Romeo with the immortal ad-lib of: "Thy knife belt breaketh, my lord." Nowhere else can you see Romeo (who has no knife belt) carry two hot lanterns, a vial of poison (which he later pours on his burnt fingers backstage), forty ducats, and a knife (meanwhile holding his cape out so he won't trip) up a flight of stairs during a blackout, and still maintain his character. And nowhere else can you see Romeo wailing brokenheartedly over Juliet's dead (got that--dead) body when in actuality he is slipping the lost knife to her so she can stab herself in the last scene.

Technical work involves stagecraft, costumes, makeup, props, sound, and lighting. It is fun to techie, making entire sets of cardboard, staples, and glue, then slapping a coat of paint over it all and texturing it for a show. Tech crews that work late at night are nicknamed Zombie crews for the bloodshot quality of their eyes. Techies tend to talk techie, with the ultimate techie insult being "suck my paintbrush."

Directing, acting, and techie-ing make up NSU's theatre department. Theatre people make it worthwhile. Why don't you come to a play the next time you're looking for entertainment? And maybe the theatre people will clutch you to their collective maternal breast and you too can learn to techie.

Oh, by the way, if you're wondering what the title of this essay has to do with theatre, just ask me. I can be found at the Little Theatre on a 20-foot ladder hanging instruments for lighting under the supervision of that infamously handsome technical director. Or I may be out scavenging for props, eyeing a little old lady and wondering if she needs her cane more than we do.



# HAIKU

Blackened clouds gather  
Blowing fall leaves there and yon  
Winter steps inside.

*Susan Lee Rynick*

Earth eyes do not see;  
Plush ears strain to hear for me:  
Spirit in shadow.

*Cindy Totten*

Distant flying V's  
Loudly honking your way South  
The cold soon follows.

*Glenn Lemoine*

The dying flower  
Leaves seeds of understanding  
To the new born bud.

*David L. Ulmer*



Shy essence of deer  
Spirit captured here in bent  
Earthen element.

*Cindy Totten*



# UNATHLETIC GIRLS

*Rita White*

Everyone has at least one concealed *bête noire* that has trailed him like a shadow throughout his life. A bane, if you will, that lingers on to disrupt his personal serenity. This affliction is not necessarily an obvious one, but it inevitably surfaces, and always, always at the wrong times. Denying or rationalizing it does no good. It must be confronted and defied with furious zeal by those who wish to rid themselves of their curse.

My experiences with my own nemesis have been the source of great vexation. They also, unfortunately, have been the source of great hilarity to those who would laugh, those who are athletic. I am their counterpart, an unathletic girl. This is my curse. Oh, not to say that everyone who isn't a first-rate player in some sports field is to be considered unathletic. No, I am one of a unique breed of girls who seemingly from birth were susceptible to this plight. Think back to your grade school days. Remember the girls like me? We were the ones who daily faced the dreaded challenge of recess.

We weren't always easy to spot in the classroom. There is, after all, nothing to that old stereotype that we were the girls in ribbons who carried around books of poetry. No, often we were the ones in the torn jeans and scuffed sneakers who traded bubble gum baseball cards with the best of them. But recess showed us for what we really were. During that fifteen or twenty minutes our very

souls were bared time and time again. We were the ones fought over by our teammates. Neither team ever wanted us as mates. Everyone knew that at the crucial moment in the game we would become possessed by an unnamed demon who would cause some inexcusable error in judgement. He would whisper menacingly into our ears, and we, in a stupor, would drop the ball, strike out, foul someone, or worse yet, run toward the wrong goal with the ball. Between this demon and our teammates, our lives were often dangerously in peril. Gradually we became excluded from the games. Teachers would encourage us to sit quietly, knowing that given an opportunity and a set of monkey bars, we could do untold damage to our bodies.

As we grew older, we "marked" girls learned to cringe at the very word "sports." We became experts at inventing methods of dodging P.E. classes. We faked maladies from flu to hemorrhoids. Each of us had a medical dictionary at our disposal. We became mastermind criminals, capable of forging influential signatures on our counterfeit P.E. excuses. We did anything necessary to avoid the humiliations that P.E. represented.

Sometime during adolescence, we unathletic girls realized that we had missed out on something. We longed to obtain that feeling of camaraderie. The athletic girls, bless their little color-coordinated gym suits, had undergone some mysterious physical

changes. They had also become the most popular group. We were completely mystified. Whatever their sports-related secret was, it drew attention.

At this point the childhood rivalry between the two groups broke into full-scale war. After all, men were now involved in the conflict, and what could be more effective in changing our lifestyle than men?

At first some of us continued to rebel against sports. Some of us exhibited disinterest, some pure terror. Eventually though, most of us admitted, if only to ourselves, our secret desire to be one of the beautiful people, an athletic girl.

It can be extremely dangerous for all involved when an unathletic girl takes it into her head to enter sports. There are many indignities and injuries to be outbraved. Many of us, when faced with yet another trial, will question our motives, if not our very sanity. It is difficult to find a single element of fun in marching up a hill that grows steadily taller beneath one's feet, laden with a forty-pound backpack crushing the spinal column. And even more difficult to find the "joy" in negotiating a barbed-wire fence. It is not a pretty sight.

When wiping out in gravel on our ten-speeds, in our short-shorts, and straining under the increasing weight of a universal weight-machine, we often have doubts and hysterical thoughts of escape. Some of us will be unable to make the transition, some of us might not even "make-it"--period. Those who do will discover after great effort what it is like to be an envied athletic girl. The rest of the unrehabilitated unathletic girls may snicker at our cuts and bruises, but at that point we must grit our teeth and think of all the wonderful new vistas awaiting us. If there aren't really any, well, who knows, maybe one day, perish the thought, we will be blessed with athletic husbands, and maybe even athletic children. Just think of the fun-fun activities: the camping, the biking, the hiking, the swimming, the boating, the...



# ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTORY

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| 7  | <i>Two Individuals, Finding Itself</i> - by Cecil E. Burns<br>(pencil, 8" x 16")   | 30 | <i>Hitler Sleeping</i> - by Grayson Harper<br>(oil, 33½" x 48")                                  |
| 8  | <i>Tricycle</i> - Photograph by Kathryn Swann<br>(35 mm)   | 31 | <i>The Forest of Pines in the Morning Stillness</i> -<br>by Cecil E. Burns<br>(pencil, 9" x 12") |
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# WHO'S WHO

*JIM ALLEN* is a graduate student in clinical psychology from Clinton, Mississippi. He names Mike Marshall as the person he most admires, for Mike taught him everything he knows.

A secretarial administration major with a history minor, *ELIZABETH BAILEY* is a senior and undecided about her future. Her hobbies include writing poetry and reading the works of Keats, Cummings, and Mary Stewart.

*MILLARD BIENVENU*, an avid yard-mower, is a junior English education major from Natchitoches. Millard has a chronic fear of food additives, an insatiable craving for peanut butter and celery, and an incorrigible case of multiple cowlicks.

"I write to fulfill another part of me, to be a complete person." So says *DONNIE BOYETT*, a graduate student working on his master's in math. As for the future, he will wait to see where things will go. As for the present, the person Donnie most admires is Leonardo da Vinci.

*DAVID BRASELL*, a native of Natchitoches, entered NSU in 1962; in 1966 he joined the Navy to avoid the Army; and in 1977, he returned to NSU at government expense. David is now employed as a water-treatment plant operator in Leesville.

Cover artist *CECIL E. BURNS* is a graduate art student and freelance artist whose main hobby is staying alive. Born in Portsmouth, Ohio, Cecil is presently a parasite of Natchitoches.

*COLLEEN CLAIRE COOK* is a photojournalism major whose permanent residence is a darkroom (any darkroom). Her main hobby, when she's not visiting the ducks at Chaplin's Lake or plotting the overthrow of computers, is shooting unsuspecting victims with a 35 mm.

*JACKIE DEES* is a senior news editorial journalism major. She worked offshore this summer as a galleyhand, finding much to inspire her on the rigs.

A graduate art student, *BILLY RAY GINGLES* sent us this message in a bottle: "I am married and living out here in the real world, seeing how far I can go into the winter without wearing socks."

*LESLIE A. GREGORY* is a freshman at NCHS and interested in all forms of theatre and art. This is her first time to contribute to *Argus*.

*GRAYSON HARPER*, a graduate student in art and theatre from Fort Worth, gave us these words of wisdom: "Goin' t' college is th' thing t' do, cuz if they kin make penicillin outta moldy cheeze, well, they kin make somethin' outta you." Grayson's accomplishments include dodging taxes, hopping freight trains, and drinking MD 20-20.

Notorious thespian *BILL HUMPHREYS* is a purveyor of obscure terminologies and a diligent student of amphigorey. From Albany, New York, this former New Orleans resident (owner of 1½ cats) can be seen wandering the halls of the Fine Arts Building mumbling things like "yoiks," "zooks," "zounds," and "whatsittoya, creepo?"

*GLENN LEMOINE* is a general studies major from Plaquemine, La. His interests include jazz, basketball, running, and reading. Glenn thinks that the Democrats should draft Frank Zappa to run in 1980.

A graduate student in clinical psychology, *RANDY LOGAN* rivals Superman because he claims to possess x-ray vision and a photographic memory.

*RICHARD G. MASON* is a performing arts major from Clinton, Iowa, and Bossier City. Rick's favorite hobbies include desensitizing prospective theatre pros and promoting dullness, podiatry, and goat worship. His goal is to someday move into that quiet corner of the A&P, perhaps to secure a franchise. Rick owns the other 1½ cats.

*MARK MIDDLEBROOKS* is a graduate student in clinical psychology, traveling incognito as just a regular guy. Mark says, "I don't know who I am, but I sure know who I'm not."

*Argus* illustrator *JOE MORAN* is a freelance artist living in Natchitoches.

A psychology major at Fort Polk, *NIGEL NICHOLSON* is fond of Tolkien, Asimov, and Hesse. Nigel, while one of many in love with self, is one of the few to be afraid of a break-up.

*ALAN PHILLIPS*, born and reared in New Orleans, is a freshman art major. He counts among his favorite things playing the piano and drawing. Alan insists that his life isn't all that funny.

*SUSAN LEE RYNICK*, a junior aviation science and forestry major, was born in Philadelphia and moved to Louisiana in 1977. Susan's hobbies include anything that looks like fun and not work, for she dislikes physical exercise. She plans to become a rich pilot or just rich.

*LYNETTE K. STEPHENSON*, an advertising major from New Orleans, loves jazz, quilts, and homemade bread. She is a number one fan of Miss Piggy and Kermit the Frog.

*KATHRYN SWANN*, a graduate student in broadcasting, thinks that little ducks will rule the world. The person Kathryn most admires is Christ, for "he went through everything we couldn't go through without breaking."

Harried *Argus* editor *CINDY TOTTEN* is a senior theatre and English major. Her main hobby is something called building character, which she tries to achieve by Argusing, metaphoring-out, and living on food made with hot water.

*DENNIS TYLER*, a sophomore from New Orleans majoring in printing technology, likes to photograph people. Dennis is on the *Current Sauce* staff and would like to thank the staff for their support and confidence in his abilities as a photographer.

A sophomore from Verda, Louisiana, *DAVID L. ULMER* believes that writing is "a great way of releasing tension or building it up, depending on how easily the words come to you." David's interests include all kinds of physical and mental activities.

*RITA WHITE* hails from Flatwoods, Louisiana. A junior English education major, with a minor in library science, she interests herself in reading, animals, and music. She looks to Disraeli for a quote that typifies her view of herself: "Though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me."





